

Delaware Public Health Tips for a Healthy Thanksgiving

DOVER – Stuffing, mashed potatoes, and pumpkin pie are some of our favorite things to eat for Thanksgiving meals. Our favorite foods however aren't always the healthiest, especially when we overindulge. This Thanksgiving, the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) wants everyone to enjoy their holiday meal, but recommends some small changes that can make this a healthier start to your holiday season.

- Go easy on your portions. Know what a serving of each item is and stick to it. As tempting as it is, skip going back for a second round.
- Incorporate healthier food choices into the meal. Make sure you have a variety of salads, and high protein foods available to balance out the carb heavy dishes.
- If serving appetizers, serve fruit or vegetable trays, salsa or low-fat dips.
- Cook using non-stick pans and skillets, to reduce or eliminate using oil when cooking.
- Cut back on sugar, salt and fat as you are cooking. Use herbs and spices instead or look for healthier substitutes such as:
 - o Use fat-free chicken broth to baste the turkey and make gravy;
 - o Use sugar substitutes in place of sugar and/or fruit purees instead of oil in baked goods;
 - o Try plain yogurt or fat-free sour cream in creamy dips, mashed potatoes, and casseroles.
- Make water your drink of choice. Drinking plenty of water helps stomachs feel full, while drinking caffeinated or alcoholic beverages can dehydrate you.

DPH also recommends incorporating some physical activity to your Thanksgiving Day activities. Start a new holiday

tradition by going for a family walk or run in the morning before the craziness of food preparation sets in, or take a walk after dinner instead of lying on the couch to watch football after a heavy meal. Other suggestions include playing outdoor games like flag football, soccer, basketball or anything else that gets your heart rate going.

“Make your family and friends the focus of the Thanksgiving holiday, as opposed to the food,” said Dr. Karyl Rattay, DPH director. “Making healthier food choices and increasing your physical activity reduces the risk for chronic diseases, including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and certain cancers, while improving mental health and wellness.”

For fun and easy physical activity ideas, visit www.getupanddosomething.org. For more information on healthy eating options, visit DPH’s [5-2-1 Almost None campaign webpage](#).

Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware’s citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, and drink almost no sugary beverages.